

PEACE

Scripture used: Galatians 5:22 (NLT)

OVERVIEW

Big Idea:

The Holy Spirit lives within us. As we peel the layers, we discover God-generated love inside of us. We find joy by inviting God to be our Lord and Savior. And we find Christian change which is internal, gradual, inevitable, and symmetric. A tree growing out of rock is a metaphor for our change. The Spirit is in us. God intends to abide in the souls of human beings in the same way a tree abides in its soil to bear fruit. Jesus is Prince of Peace, and our God is God of Peace. We face life with the confidence in God's love, security in God's wisdom, and rest in God's salvation.

KEY POINTS

- 1) To be at peace, we must remember to be with God, and forgo shame and guilt. Yes, we can have regret. But we must remember that Jesus has made us friends of God (Romans 5:11) and that there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ (Romans 8:11).
- 2) To be of God, we remember to trust in the Lord and make Him our hope and confidence (Jeremiah 17:7). The metaphorical tree overcomes heat, drought, and poor soil to continuously produce green leaves and fruits. This is modeled by Christ Himself who is at peace as he stays up and waits for his arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane. We must return to our place of peace (church, small groups, devotion, contemplation) to be reminded that God holds sway over the world. We will rejoice and be considerate in all that we do (Philippians 4:4-6).
- 3) We as Christians are expecting the arrival of the Kingdom when there will be no more grief. C.S. Lewis encouraged us to enjoy the sunbeam but not to miss the sun. Every pleasure is a sample of God's intent. Pay attention to the daily miracles around you. Don't complain and miss the good news of God. Leave worry, anxiety, restlessness, discontent behind - they are the opposite of peace. Galatians 5:20 outlines the antithesis of the Fruits of the Spirit: idolatry, hostility, quarreling, selfish ambition, division. We must reject those, and be peacemakers instead. God's love lives in us and flows through us.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - When have you had an experience of deep peace and security? What tends to cause you to lack peace in your daily life?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Consider Jeremiah 17:7-8. If you considered your life like a tree, what would the tree look like? What are the roots of your life holding on to? What is the source of sustenance and strength in your life? Is there an assurance that you are going to be ok, or is there uncertainty? How might the roots of your life grow in the direction of being anchored in God, so that you can live with a real source of peace?
- 3) **DO** - Consider Philippians 4:6-7. What are the worries and anxieties on your heart right now that you can actively pray about? Present your requests to God and entrust your hopes and desires to Him. Pray with a sense of thanksgiving, remembering all that God has already done. Allow God's goodness in your life to give you a foundation of contentment and trust, so that you can be secure no matter how God responds to your prayers. Ask for peace that surpasses understanding that fill your life. Find someone else in your life group to pray with, so that you have a source of encouragement to persevere in prayer and trust in God!